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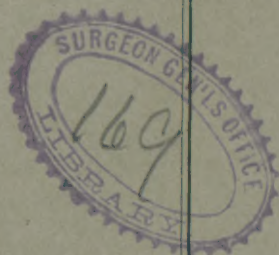
Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

ANNUAL MESSAGE

BY

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*THE ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT,
WM. H. ANDERSON, M. D.*

It becomes my duty, and I deem it my great privilege, to deliver to you the Annual Message of the President of the Association. No man can feel prouder of this Association than myself. Connected with it from its earliest inception, I have watched its rise and progress with intense anxiety, and now deeply enjoy the promise that it gives of culminating into great power and usefulness. States that were old when Alabama was a primeval forest have tried to reach the point of professional organization which we have attained, but have not been able to do so. Whether we have had a more plastic material in the profession to work upon than they had, or whether we have persevered when they gave up the case as hopeless, I do not know ; but certain it is, that in some important particulars for the good of the profession and of the people, we are at this moment in advance of them all in our legislation.

Let us, for a moment, glance at the means by which we have arrived at this elevated stand-point. The earlier meetings of the Association showed very plainly that we had the material in our midst, if we could only get it into good and consistent working order. One of our hardest workers and deepest thinkers surveyed the situation, and gave the influence of his powerful mind to assist in mastering it. He re-modeled the Constitution under which we worked, and made it more effective. It was presented to the assembled wisdom of the Association; but minds less trained to comprehensiveness of thought could not grasp it in its practical detail. It seemed to most of us too far reaching for the present status of the profession. It asked, as we thought, too much

to be consistent with the surroundings of the physician and the people. The Temple that it would construct, it is true, looked beautiful as a whole; but could we build it with the means at our disposal? The architect thought that we could; the actual builders demurred, and threw such obstacles in the way as almost to discourage the friends of the scheme. At length, however, after years of toil and perseverance, after remodeling and changing minor details, we got our new Constitution, and have grown strong and powerful under its wise and well conceived measures. Now, what shall we do to preserve it—to enrich it—to keep it on a level with the growing wants of the age, and to hand it down to our posterity as a valuable memento of our wisdom, and our love for the well-being of the profession?

In the first place, gentlemen, we want to cherish a deeper interest in the profession, an interest that will make us study assiduously the old matter, which the centuries have sifted out from the chaff, and which the learned among us consider as indisputably good. The same deep interest should be taken in all that is new when it emanates from a proper source. We have no time to be idle. The mere fact of a local reputation among the patients of his clientele, should not make the physician self-satisfied with his knowledge, and cause him to relapse into indifference. Any one man's sphere of observation is necessarily small, and if he desires to keep up with his calling he must study the new revelations of his department of science. Many of them may be worthless—nay, many are mere delusions of ardent and enthusiastic investigators; but each man should acquaint himself with the so called facts, and judge of them from the stand-point of his own experience. He will always learn something which will be of benefit to his patients, and even if that were not the case, the very fact of his being a student in his profession will give him more influence, and widen his sphere of usefulness. One man may be intellectually brighter than another, may acquire information more rapidly than another; but wisdom is the result of thought; it comes

spontaneously to no man ; it is the offspring of well-weighed facts which have been acquired either by our own experience, or the careful investigation of others. If every physician in a State would nerve himself up to continued study while he is practicing his profession, his sphere of knowledge would be enlarged, and his usefulness greatly augmented. I know too well, gentlemen, that the physician in the country, in the village, and in the city, is very apt to become mentally inert when he is partially overcome by physical fatigue ; is too prone to listen to the siren voice of indifference and bodily ease, and thus to lose the golden hours, that, in this day of progress, always come freighted with the priceless stores of science. By our Constitution, my co-workers in the field of medicine, I am not here on this occasion to deliver to you an essay filled with the attractive events of medical history, or the flowers of professional literature ; but I am called on, in delivering this message, to suggest—to tell you what I conceive to be the wants of the profession ; and in my humble opinion more intellectual work is required to stamp on the community the impress that should attach to the name of every active practitioner. This will increase our influence, build up confidence in us, and give weight to our opinions at the domestic hearth, in our social relations with our fellowmen, and in the form of our medical assemblies.

The discussions that have taken place in this Association at its various annual meetings, have certainly brought before us an extensive field for contemplation and research. Some of the most valuable medicines in the *materia medica* have had their virtues freely ventilated by many of our most experienced physicians. These discussions are of greater value because they are participated in by active practitioners, who have tested the value of the remedies in question in our own climate. Locality and the causes of disease incident to it, do certainly modify the effect of some medicines ; so that the therapeutic action of a remedy in Maine need not necessarily be the same in Alabama where different causes of

disease exist, and where different constitutions are the subjects of treatment. Hence, I attach great importance to these discussions when carried on in a short decisive manner by any of our members, either old or young; and I hope they will be continued, so far as the transaction of other important business will allow. Sir Thomas Watson calls therapeutics "the final and supreme stage of medicine," and all practical knowledge gained, either by our own experience or that of others, is of the first importance to all who practice the healing art.

I now approach, gentlemen, a delicate subject, namely: The Ethics of our Profession. We have adopted the "Code" of the American Medical Association, and I suppose that we must continue to be governed by it on all subjects of ethics. But I long to see the day when the profession of Alabama will not require any Code, except that unwritten Code, which dwells in the bosom of every gentleman in the profession and out of it. The members of the Association are the leaders of medical thought and medical sentiment in Alabama. To the latter belongs the ethics which should govern us. If we desire to see the rising generation of physicians occupy a high and cultivated stand in society, we must teach them both by precept and example. They naturally look to us as the exponents of medical demeanor. In our midst, then, must begin that culture which abhors all that is base and sordid in the relation of one physician to another. The acute perception of right and wrong is not given to all men alike; but when sufficient numbers in any organization take a very high stand in their social relations, the rest will absorb it and be governed accordingly. Virtue, which is the basis of all ethics, is a part of every man's composition, and when practiced for its own sake, not for the world's applause, it is the most contagious of all the passions that belong to man; and really, if it ought to be the guiding star of any body of men, next to that of the sacred ministry, it should be of physicians in every capacity of their calling, whether as students, as teachers, or as practitioners. The rights of others—

may, the welfare of others, in our professional intercourse, should always be respected. There is no reputation so brilliant that it cannot be dimmed by even a lack of courtesy towards our professional brethren ; but when we invade their rights, a stain falls upon us which even the mantle of charity finds it hard to cover. Gentlemen, in the great drama of society, there is no character so beautiful as the learned and cultured physician. He goes on his daily rounds to relieve the suffering of his fellowmen, and is a shining mark among his peers. They do not hesitate to accord to him all the encomium he deserves, because his actions strike a chord that is ever ready to vibrate in every bosom belonging to humanity.

This unwritten ethics should be taught to every student who enters the Doctor's office as a pupil. Let the foundation be laid there by the example of his tutor, and then when he enters the lecture rooms of the College, the superstructure should be built by the moral attitude of his professors. The mind of youth is plastic, and moral precepts instilled into it by teachers leave an impress which is generally indelible. If teachers in colleges would interweave in their lectures, when ever opportunity presents, sentiments reaching to a high order of manhood, the next generation of physicians would require no written Code of Ethics to govern them in their intercourse with each other and with the community. It has fallen to my lot, fellow-members, on several occasions, to sit in courts called to decide on breaches of Medical Ethics, and I must say that I always felt deeply humiliated, when I had to censure a professional brother for conduct unbecoming a physician. Even in that early day, when the sage of Cos lectured to his Grecian youth, he imbued them with ideas of professional etiquette, which would reflect lustre on the medical colleges of the 19th century ; and although in the darkness and rudeness of the ages which succeeded the Grecian Sage, his precepts were mainly forgotten, yet they revived again in the dawning light of later centuries, and found expression in the lives and actions

of some of our immediate medical ancestors whose names carry a thrill into the bosom of every student of medical history. Let us then, gentlemen, cultivate *tone* in our profession, and we will reap a reward before whose brightness the lustre of ill-acquired gold will pale, and fade into utter insignificance.

In the history of our profession we have arrived at a period when the spirit of the age is emphatically *onward*. Our common country covers a very large area, and the state of civilization on the borders is in many instances equal to that of the center. Every geographical division, indeed every State expects every other State to do its duty towards elevating the profession. A wholesome competition is now going on between the several States, and while Alabama has taken the lead in some respects, she is behind in others. What we have done has been accomplished by organization, and what we are to do will depend entirely upon better and better organization. The members of the profession must link themselves more closely together, and each individual should keep himself in close accord with this central body, whose influence is now stamping itself on the legislation of the country. A distinguished Judge of the Supreme Court, now gone to his rest, once told me that the medical profession in any country was all-powerful, so far as its own interests were concerned, if it would concentrate its forces. This was told me when I was a young man, and some thirty years of practical experience since has taught me that it was true. The laws of a country are generally founded on the immutable basis of justice and of truth ; but it often happens that the practical administration of such laws is faulty. This leads to skepticism. There are even many skeptics in regard to religion, but there are few about the value of rational medicine. No matter what a man may think when his body is buoyant with health and strength, yet when he feels the dire twinges of neuralgia, when the fever rages through his veins and threatens to consume him, when the cough seems to rack his very soul, he cannot resist crying for help. In

his agony he looks to the physician for relief, and this begets that feeling of dependence which, as a general rule, sinks deep into his heart. Medicine is to him a mystery. He is uneducated in its principles, he knows little of its philosophy, and hence he yields to him who is his physician and his friend. This is the secret of that influence which in the aggregate we have over the masses in *medical* matters.

As a class we are not busied with politics, we dabble little in commerce, we keep as clear as possible of litigation, and this makes us, as it were, a people apart, attending to our own business, and that business the preservation of that greatest blessing—the health of our fellow men. In the earlier times the physician gave medicine for relief and then his work was done. But at the present day our benevolent profession reaches far out into the great problems that claim the attention of society from its circumference to its center. From our knowledge of chemistry and its collateral departments we have laid the foundation and are rapidly building up the science of sanitation. Our work is acknowledged as important and useful by the leading statesmen and philanthropists of the day. We have thus not only the claim of kindly friendship upon those whom we have relieved, but we have in addition, that respect which is given to all classes of men who spend their time in carrying out schemes of general beneficence. This increases our power with the masses and enables us to get the legislation we desire, provided we can show that such legislation has no selfish aim in view. The public must and will appreciate the sacrifices we make for the public good. Why are we here, gentlemen, to-day, at an aggregate expense of three or four thousand dollars out of our own pockets, an expense which we can ill afford to encounter? Is it for ourselves individually? Are we to be benefitted in person? By no means. We are here to consult, to devise, and to put in practice what will be of more benefit to the public than to ourselves. We have never asked the legislature for the enactment of any law that bore the slightest impress of selfishness. We are working only

to elevate our profession by making it useful to our fellow-man, in relieving his sufferings, improving his condition, and lengthening the span of his natural life.

One of the grandest philosophers of the last century, the celebrated Descartes, said "If it be possible to perfect mankind the *means* of the perfection will be found in the medical sciences." In making this remark, the philosopher considered the "medical sciences" in their broadest sense. Not the mere simple attempts to cure bodily ailments, but the philanthropic purpose of improving and enlarging the mind, of raising the standard of physical comfort, and adding more years to human existence. Professor Packard, in his address to the Medical Association of Maine in 1879 says, "There are certain truths which should be presented to the people, certain facts which they should know; and they expect to hear them from the Profession. If we can fulfill these requirements as becomes educators and advisors we can obtain a hold on the community which we can accomplish in no other way. Nothing will sooner convince the people of our usefulness than by making ourselves useful to them, nothing will conduce more towards gaining public respect and confidence, than proving ourselves capable instructors and counsellors." I make this long quotation to show that throughout the entire country, from Mainë to the Gulf of Mexico, the sentiment of the profession is unanimous on the subject of acquiring influence by a cultivated education.

No Presidential address to a medical organization like the present would be complete at this day without reference to hygiene. The subject, I know, is hackneyed; but it must be met, even at the expense of being a little tedious. In the cities I have to report an increasing interest in Alabama about this important subject. The people are at last awakening from their dreamy indifference to general sanitation, and this is due to the constant efforts of the County Boards of Health in presenting the matter more and more clearly to their understanding. No wonder the masses have been for many years obtuse on this subject, because they can neither

see nor smell the causes of disease, and it has been difficult to acquaint them therewith through their intellectual faculties. At last, however, through the repeated arguments of the Doctors, assisted by the medical and the general press, they are beginning to understand that a hidden foe may lurk where one is least to be expected. Continued interest on the subject of hygiene, in all its bearings, is recommended to the members of the Association, and no occasion should be lost to ventilate its importance in the social circle and before the public.

As a matter of personal interest, but more particularly as President of this Association, I attended the meeting of the Public Health Association in New Orleans in December last. The large number of valuable papers on the subject of sanitation presented to that body by some of the most distinguished scientists of the country, gave presage of a very deep and growing interest in both public and private hygiene. Eminent engineers and philanthropists outside of the profession were in attendance, showing, that what a few years ago belonged only to medical circles, was now becoming, through the efforts of the faculty, a subject of all-absorbing interest to the most cultivated intellects of the age. From an eminent engineer there we learned that by means of modern appliances whole districts of marshy territory, covering a large number of square miles, could be drained at a comparatively small expense so as to make fertile and productive fields of what was formerly a mere swamp reeking with pestilential poison. Drainage for agricultural purposes suggested itself to the common sense of mankind centuries ago; but drainage as a sanitary expedient is the offspring of medical thought, suggested by microscopic observation and chemical research. Minute analysis of an unwholesome atmosphere shows it to be laden with solid particles of almost inconceivable fineness. The ordinary physicists might have discovered these spores, it is true; but it took the physician to follow up the discovery and to show how the poisonous matter entered the blood, or invaded the tissues, and what

averages it produced in the general system. We have only entered upon the threshold of this interesting domain of science, which it becomes the younger men of the profession to pursue with ardor; and if they have not the time or opportunity to make researches themselves they should at least keep up with the developments and make practical uses of them.

The past history of the profession is full of encouragement to persevere in our studies. If we were to take from the vast repertory of physical and biological science all that has been contributed by medical men, there would be a void painful indeed to contemplate. Anatomy would be unknown and the wonderful structure of the animal frame, before which the most complicated machinery made by human hands fades into insignificance, would be shrouded in utter darkness. The domain of physiology, now so inviting to travel in, and from which we gain so much that is interesting, instructive, and even necessary to our comfort and happiness, not only in this world, but in the contemplation of a future existence, would be shorn from our present state of knowledge, and leave nothing for us to look upon but an arid waste; the grand phenomena of life, in its varied stages of growth and development, would cease to be an object of the most cherished interest, and leave us with the vague and brutal conceptions of the most untutored savage. The great botanists of the past, who have unfolded to us the vegetable kingdom, with its varied and beautiful attractions, were medical scholars in search of the secret paths in the great labyrinth of nature. The microscopists who have penetrated into the wonders of the unseen world, and revealed the minute structure of those tiny inhabitants that bound into life and end their ephemeral existence in less than an hour, were members of the profession of medicine. Some of the greatest of the living and dead astronomers left the labors of the dissecting room to plunge into space and fathom its deepest abysses. Many of the geologists who withdrew the veil of ignorance that shrouded the eyes of our

ancestors, and pointed to the remote antiquity of the world we live in, who traced its passage from a fiery mist floating in ether to the green earth that brought forth man and every creeping thing that reflects the glory of its Maker, were educated in the halls of medical colleges. In the mediæval revival of literature and science, the universities were indebted to the medical faculty for some of their most illustrious professors; and even at the present day many of the distinguished scientists who fill the chairs of chemistry, physics, and biology are doctors of medicine. Surely, then, we do not need encouragement to arduous and continued study.

I have quoted Sir Thomas Watson as saying that therapeutics "is the final and supreme stage of medicine." So it is in the sense in which he used the word medicine. When disease has invaded the system, then therapeutics is our chief anchor in staying its progress, and a knowledge of remedies our only hope in neutralizing and expelling the morbid poison. To this end we must labor in the field of pathology and therapeutics, and he who has amassed the greatest experience in the use of remedies is generally the most successful and the most popular physician. But we must go beyond the symptoms and the ravages of disease, we must beard the lioness in her den and strangle her whelps that they may not mature and go forth to destroy us. This is preventive medicine, this is hygiene, and we must keep wide awake to its importance. In pure therapeutics, we can only act in concert with each other, but in public hygiene, we can call in the aid of the philosopher, the physician, and the philanthropist. The field here is larger, the scope is wider, and the reward is far more precious and enduring. He that makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is of more value to mankind than the whole host of politicians. This is the saying of an eminent humanitarian. In like manner, he who destroys the *cause* of disease, who emasculates the germs of diphtheria and small-pox, and who stops the production of the poison that gives rise to yellow fever, cholera, and consumption, deserves

to stand on a monument overlooking that of Jenner, or Howard, or Napoleon, or Washington. I am pleased to say that this Association has been at work on one great branch of hygiene. The paper of Dr. Seelye on "Drainage and Under-drainage," is a valuable acquisition to hygienic literature.

In the Northern and Middle States consumption of the lungs carries off about twenty-eight per centum of the adult population. In these States we have tolerably reliable statistics, and they show a fearful result. In the Southern States, outside of the cities, our statistics are too meagre to be relied on, but in the cities, tubercular phthisis shows a mortality of fully twenty per centum of the adult population. It has been proved clearly that a thorough system of drainage lessens the mortality by phthisis fifteen per cent. Many other diseases are also lessened in their danger and in their death-rate by good drainage. Hence we cannot disseminate these truths too widely among the people. The expense must be borne by them, and would be cheerfully met if they were as sure of the facts as we are. The medical profession must educate them up to the proper point, and, by their united effort, it can be done. But this union of thought and sentiment can only be brought about by an organization like our own, sending its ramifications into every village and hamlet in our state. This idea of perfect organization should impress us the more at this time, from the fact that for the want of it we came very near losing, at the last session of the legislature, some very important enactments. There was even an effort made to repeal laws already in force for the passage of which we had labored faithfully for years past. If the members of the profession in the several counties of the state had taken sufficient interest in enlightening the members of the legislature on these subjects before they left their homes there would have been no trouble at all. As it turned out, however, it took all the energy and fidelity of the Senior Censor, assisted by the faculty at Montgomery who worked nobly in the cause, to keep up our past legislation and

secure the passage of the law bearing on the important subject of vital statistics. We must not allow ourselves to go backwards and thus lose the prestige we have acquired. This is an inviting theme, gentlemen, to dwell upon, but I must leave it for the present.

In June last, I attended the meeting of the American Medical Association, in New York. I had not been present at an annual meeting of that Association for twenty years, and was very agreeably surprised to find that its former hundreds of members had swelled to thousands, and that the organization was far more complete than it was twenty years ago. Among several circles of physicians I had the great pleasure to hear the Medical Association of the State of Alabama spoken of in the highest terms. The peculiar features of our organization had evidently impressed themselves on the medical faculty of states far distant from us, and among these were some of the oldest states in the union. When I returned, I addressed the following circular to a large number of physicians in Alabama, who did not belong to any medical society :

MOBILE, July 25, 1880.

DEAR DOCTOR : So important do I deem it for the good of the medical profession of Alabama that every practitioner in the State should join the medical society of his county, that I take the liberty of sending you this circular, to call your attention to the subject.

By joining your county medical society you become affiliated with the Medical Association of the State, and I can assure you that it is not only an honor to belong to that body, but it is to the interest of every physician in the State to be a member of it. He thus individually is made part and parcel of the *legal machinery* that regulates the practice of medicine in Alabama, administers the health laws of the country, and has a general supervision over all the interests of the medical profession.

At the recent meeting of the American Medical Association, where two thousand physicians were present, I had the great satisfaction of hearing, on every side, that the profession of Alabama was better organized than that of any other State in the Union. This was a great compliment, and I felt so proud of it that I determined, on my return home, to write to every physician in the State whose name I could get, and urge him at once to join his county medical society, so that, by our united efforts, we may keep Alabama in the front rank of similar organizations.

To this important end, doctor, I address you and ask you, in the name and

for the good of our common profession, to become one of us, and to use your influence to get all of your medical friends, who are not already members, to join your county society.

I remain, doctor, very respectfully,

WM. H. ANDERSON, M. D.,

President of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

I have reason to believe that the foregoing appeal bore good fruit, since I received more than a dozen responses which were favorable. As our Association advances in age and usefulness, I am quite sure that we will gather in a large majority of the practitioners of the State, and then we will realize the golden dreams of the most sanguine among us, and become a power for good which will be a bright example for our sister associations in other States.

At the request of the Senior Censor, I attended, in July last, a meeting of the State Board of Health. The meeting was held at Blount Springs, and, being *ex-officio* chairman of the board, I presided at its session. This was a very interesting meeting, at which some valuable papers were read and thoroughly considered. These documents formed the basis of important legislation for the General Assembly then ensuing, and although we hardly expected that some of our proposed "bills" would pass and be enacted into laws, yet we thought the time had come to introduce them, and thus bring them before the general public for their mature consideration. These several "bills" and the arguments in favor of their passage by the legislature, will be found in Circular No. 4, issued by the State Board of Health, and your respectful attention is called to the various subjects there discussed. I am pleased to say that most complimentary allusions have been made to this "circular" by the medical press of the great eastern cities. The document throughout gives substantial evidence that your State Board has not been idle, but that it has kept up with the requirements of the age. *Progress* is its watchword; and it is to be hoped that you will fill all vacancies in its membership with the wisest and the best men belonging to our organization. I sincerely trust, too, that whenever a meeting of the board is

called by the Senior Censor, or the President, the members composing it will respond to the call, and punctually attend. This board has great responsibilities, and much weight in the legislative councils of the State.

Among other legislative enactments that I deem it advisable for the State Board of Health to consider, is the thorough discussion of the subject of compulsory vaccination, with the view of framing a law to be passed by the General Assembly. In the cities the municipal authorities assume the right of requiring every person to be vaccinated on the penalty of fine and imprisonment. In the country, however, there are no such laws, and no power to enforce vaccination. It occurs to me, that in view of the great importance of vaccination as a public health measure, the county commissioners might be empowered by law to act under the advice of their respective county boards of health, and to make vaccination, and revaccination when necessary, compulsory. If we go no farther than our own State for *certain* data on this subject, we find that the severe epidemic of small-pox in Mobile in 1874 was stamped out in less than four months, owing to the energetic measures of the board of health, assisted by appropriate municipal legislation. Since that time, so vigilant has been the board, through its special police, that no three cases have occurred in the same year, either in the city or county. It should be remembered, also, that Mobile, being a seaport town, and the terminus of several railroads that extend into every part of the United States, is especially liable to receive cases of small-pox. In point of fact, such cases are received annually, but the vigilance of the board of health detects them immediately, and so isolates them, and takes other measures to prevent their spread, that we seldom hear of a new case among any of our citizens.

QUARANTINE.

In this connection I may say a few words about quarantine. The subject of quarantine is always a delicate one to handle, inasmuch as it comes in conflict with the natural and

vested rights of individuals for the benefit of the public at large. It can be put in force properly only by legal enactments, and as it is thoroughly understood by medical men alone of experience and enlarged ideas, the state is dependent on our profession for enlightened views to guide it in making the necessary laws bearing on the subject. The Censors of our Association fully comprehend the magnitude of the trust reposed in them, and they have given anxious thought to the subject in all its bearings. Irrespective of fear or favor they should be supported by every member of the Association so that their recommendations may go forth with the unanimous consent of the profession of the State. In the interval of the legislative sessions, which intervals last two years under our present system, more or less discretion must be given to the State Board of Health, since it has to act when danger approaches, and such action sometimes must be taken immediately. Nothing can be done, however, without money, and an appropriation from the state should always be in readiness to meet the necessary expenses. The experience of some of the Eastern States has long since proved the efficacy of such a plan, and accordingly some of our sister states in the South have placed considerable sums in the treasury subject to the call of the State Board of Health. Very large amounts can be saved to a state by prompt action of the Board of Health in preventing the ingress within its borders of contagious diseases, and especially of yellow fever and cholera. It was clearly proved by the Cholera Commission that the last invasion of this disease in a western city might have been easily prevented with sufficient law and sufficient money.

To come nearer home: There are ample data to prove that a severe epidemic of yellow fever was prevented in Mobile in 1878 by the active vigilance of the City Board of Health. The members of this Board saw the danger threatening on every side, and persuaded the municipal authorities to have an appropriation ready to be drawn on when the exigency of the occasion demanded. This can be easily accom-

plished in the cities ; but the State may be invaded at points where there are no local authorities to furnish either law or money, and in such cases the State Board should have the power to act immediately and should be provided with funds for the purpose. To this end we should continue to petition the Legislature to have on hand an appropriation ready to meet the emergency. Here again we find the advantage of unity in professional matters, and of the power we can exert by individual action. This subject can be properly ventilated among the people so that the members elect of the Legislature can go into council imbued with the wishes of their constituents. It is in this way that every member of the profession can, if he chooses to do so, become a part of the legal machinery for regulating the sanitary affairs of the State. In States further advanced than we are on this branch of the subject, Boards of Health have control of everything that bears on local and general sanitation. In some of the cities no building can be erected without a certificate from the health authorities attesting that the lot has a proper grade for drainage ; and even the vaults are located by the same authority.

In New York the Health Board has almost plenary power on the subject of sanitation. The trees in the streets are planted or removed under its direction. The church bells are silenced when they become a nuisance to the sick ; the schools are especially subject to its guidance so far as crowding, sunshine and ventilation are concerned. All stocks of fruits, vegetables and meats are inspected, and prohibited from being sold if they are found to be impure and unwholesome. The vital statistics are completely under its control, and the penalties are heavy for the infraction of its laws. The people have been educated to this stringent legislation by the constant teaching of the physicians, and they obey willingly because they have become satisfied that it is all for their own good. In this State we can accomplish the same thing if we work together intelligently and harmoniously. When Boards of Health are appointed by Governors of States,

or the municipal authorities of cities, they are apt to be made by their patronage political machines, and then may become dangerous if invested with power. But when they are appointed by the medical profession, and are directly answerable to the profession for their acts, they may be considered perfectly trustworthy. Nor should they be of a *mixed* character, having only joint authority with commercial men under the plea that business men are necessary to watch the interests of commerce. All such mixed organizations are faulty, and must prove deleterious to the community to a far greater extent than the compensation accruing to commercial interests. The laws of Alabama, thanks to the wisdom of this Association, have placed the Health Department of the State above the arena of politics and the tempoary interests of commerce.

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

This important subject must not be overlooked in this address. Owing to our peculiar social status since the late war the standard of medical education among the rising generation of Southern physicians has been lower than we could desire. There are many reasons for this. In the first place, the general poverty of the population has been such that the youth of the country could not avail themselves of a collegiate education in the literary departments, and they were thus wanting in the habits of study when they entered our Medical Colleges. For the same reason, their knowledge of chemistry and physical science was of the most rudimentary character, and without a sufficient knowledge of these adjunct departments of learning no medical education can be at all complete. But in the past this could not be helped. We may regret it but it was beyond our reach to remedy it. The colleges, with all their expensive appliances were here at hand. Able and experienced professors were ready to teach. The country was in want of practicing physicians and it was impossible to require of matriculants a knowledge of the subjects taught in high schools and universities when such in-

stitutions were closed, and the classes they would have had were under arms in the field of war. All these were misfortunes that came upon this generation, and nothing is left for us but to regret that it was so. Northern and Eastern Colleges could demand a baccalaureate degree before allowing students to matriculate for a medical education, but we could not because it was impracticable. The consequence of this unfortunate state of things we deplore, but it was not our fault, and we should not be called to account for it by our professional brothers in more favored sections of our common country. The circumstances that surround us however, are undergoing a change and prosperity is again dawning on our late blighted country. We must take advantage of the incoming tide and see to it that our profession shall suffer no more. If we do not in the future try to raise the standard of medical education it will be our fault and we shall deserve reproach.

I have the highest hopes for amelioration in medical instruction. The American Medical College Association, whose late session I attended in New York, is moving wisely and with much animus in the matter. The term of attendance on lectures has already been extended to three years, and I think it will be a very short while before a literary degree, or its equivalent, will be demanded of all students who matriculate in the colleges. This, with the extension of the course, will do much to raise the general standard of education, and bring into the ranks of the profession annually many accomplished scholars. But after all the work must be begun by the individual members of the profession. Each one of us must advise the young man who contemplates the study of medicine to prepare himself with a good English and classical education before he goes to a medical college. He should be made to know the mortification that must so often be suffered by him in after life, when, with his rising reputation as a popular physician, he is compelled to meet with those who are so far his superiors in general education and literary accomplishments. Under the present system it

will not do to trust altogether to the medical colleges to require a literary degree, or to make preliminary examination before permitting students to matriculate. There are few colleges that will honestly carry out their promise on this head. The temptation to get in students both for pecuniary gain and for the eclat of large classes, is too great not to be yielded to. This plan was tried in Great Britain, but Sir William Gull, in his address before the Grand Medical Council, distinctly says, "that the preliminary education examination has proved good for nothing as a means of selecting men entering the profession; or for rejecting those who have not sufficient intellectual training." According to the same authority the baccalaureate degree system is equally faulty, since it is a noted fact that many young men are *crammed* for the purpose of obtaining a degree. If this be true in England, how much more true is it in this country where the degree of A. B. is granted by literary, so called, colleges whose curriculum does not embrace as much as that of a respectable high school. It is for these reasons that I call upon the members of our Association to discourage ignorant young men from entering the profession at all.

I have for many years entertained the opinion that colleges should not have the power of granting degrees with license to practice medicine. I think that colleges should teach, but that the licensing power should be vested in a medical board entirely independent of them. I have thought that there should be but one board with such power in any State, and that such board should meet annually or semi-annually for the purpose of examining candidates for the doctor's degree. About twenty-six years ago, in the early part of my professional career, I was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Medical Education, then one of the standing committees of the American Medical Association. Appreciating the high honor of such an appointment so early in my professional career, I gave much anxious thought to the subject. I corresponded with many distinguished educators in America, in England, and on the Continent, and

the result of my labors was, that I concluded to recommend the Association to take such steps as would discourage the granting of degrees, with license to practice, by the colleges, and to invest the power in a National Board, appointed by the Association, the said board to sit for several weeks annually at the National Capital and to be paid liberally by Congress for its services. Some of my professional friends thought favorably of the scheme, and before the next meeting of the Association I submitted my report to the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, but a majority of them, to my great mortification, gave it as their opinion that the plan would be unconstitutional. I still think, however, that the colleges should be bereft of the power to give license to practice, and should be restricted simply to teaching.

I might close here, but I desire to say something on another subject which may be considered by some of you as irrelevant. The 7th Section of the first Article of our Code of Ethics, referring "to the duties of physicians to their patients," says: "The opportunity which a physician not unfrequently enjoys of promoting and strengthening the good resolutions of his patients, suffering under the consequences of vicious conduct, ought never to be neglected. His counsels, or even remonstrances, will give satisfaction, not offense, if they be proffered with politeness, and evince a genuine love of virtue, accompanied by a sincere interest in the welfare of the person to whom they are addressed."

Here, gentlemen, the physician has it in his power to assume as a laymen the responsibilities that generally attach to the order of the clergy. It is a high and a holy privilege thus to be able to point to an erring brother the path that will lift him from the downward road of immorality and introduce him, or bring him back, within the pale of moral duty. The time, the place, the opportunity, the surrounding circumstances, are offered to the physician which are presented to no other man, and they should never be neglected. When stretched on the bed of sickness caused by debauch,

with the mind and the body both subdued, the patient is in a proper frame to receive from the friend who is trying to restore him to physical health, those gentle and kindly admonitions which may sink deep into his heart and make bright the remainder of his career. Doubtless every physician within the sound of my voice can recall instances in which he has done, or might have done, in this way, a lasting kindness to a fellow-man; and who will not say, that the memory of having been instrumental in doing good of this nature is not worth more to him than gold, or silver, or precious gems? These are some of those valued and comforting reflections that sweeten the life of the physician and raise his spiritual nature above the sordid sphere of the world to the realms where all is pure and all is holy. They are those rewards of our profession which constitute its true grandeur and elevate it above the level of the ordinary callings of life. Let us, then, improve all such opportunities, and thus carry out the teachings of our Code of Ethics, whether written or unwritten. Sad, indeed, would be our career if we were restricted alone to visiting the sick in order to prescribe for bodily ailments, and to have our hearts torn, as they often are, with the anxiety of watching the uncertainty attendant on the phases of disease. Money can never pay us for this species of mental torture where the feelings are often wrought to the highest pitch through the strain of the most delicate parts of our organism. Few of us who have had the experience of the general practitioner would be willing to go over our professional lives, or advise others to study medicine, if there were not some higher compensation than dollars and cents for such wear and tear of our affections. But when we can, by the opportunities of our profession, become moral agents also, and scatter the seeds that will ripen into the golden harvest of a high humanity, we assume the livery of the true philanthropist or the devoted priest of God, and feel indeed that we have privileges beyond those of most of the other professions.

In this connection, I may also allude to still another sub-

ject. Our profession has been reproached for leading to infidelity and atheism. It is too true that some few of its great masters in Germany and England, and I am sorry to say, one or two highly educated teachers in our own country, have gone aside from their legitimate scientific researches and pretended to prove that the investigations of physical science and biology lead to disbelief in any Supreme Architect of the Universe. At any rate they teach, that if there is, He is unknowable and incomprehensible to the human intellect. I will go into no subtle disquisition to show that unity in design must require a Designer, that order in nature must be produced by an Ordainer. Wiser men and deeper thinkers have done this already and have responded to every argument brought forward by these unbelieving philosophers. They have proved that physical science depends on the unity of nature, and that unity must have its basis in *one* supernatural Being. But we must not disguise the fact that these novel doctrines have startled the age. Hence, for the sake of our profession, for the sake of science, and for the sake of each one of you individually I must briefly refer to them.

In the language of one of England's greatest statesmen, I may say to you what he said to a public assembly on a late occasion. It is this: "You live," says he, "in an age of inquiry, of doubt, of mental restlessness; in an age, when more than at any other, men are unwilling to accept traditional solutions of the great mysteries which surround our life; and when many brains are bewildered, and many hearts are made to ache, by vain efforts to solve problems impenetrable by reason. You cannot escape the common destiny. Those of you who reflect will inevitably have times of perplexity when the very purposes of life seem obscure and doubtful, when traditions appear to fail and reason itself is baffled, and when men ask in their bewilderment, 'what does it mean?' " Aye, what *does* it mean? What mean these deep researches into mental and physical science where the mind comes to an abyss it cannot fathom,

and where the past track it has traveled has overwhelmed it with so much doubt that it is afraid to return to the simple faith with which it started.

I tell you, gentlemen, what I am afraid it *does* mean. Clothe it in the most powerful logic that is known to the scholar; ornament it with the most fascinating periods of rhetoric; dignify it as you may by appeals to your reason and better judgment; it still inevitably leads, the great masses at any rate, into doubt and disbelief. The traditions that guided the good and great of the human race in the ages that are past have borne too much fruit to be forgotten by us for the new speculations, improperly called *revelations*, of modern science. Not that I ignore the physical researches of these great masters, or am prepared to say that they are not seeking after truth. On the contrary, I know that they are; but I stand aghast at the conclusions, which overwhelming *them*, may carry disaster and bitter woe to the generation in which we live. They plunge into the depths of space, and see the far distant worlds breaking into fragments, and resolving again into masses to grow once more into other worlds. They magnify with their instruments the minutest specks of organic matter and find life and action pervading every particle subjected to their vision. They analyze the brain, and seeing no resting place for the immortal principle, they ignore it altogether. Because they cannot raise the veil to see what there is behind they call it a void filled with the very blackness of darkness. And yet, gentlemen, in that obscurity behind; in those dark chambers and mysterious cells, themselves ever wasting and ever renewing, lies the whole domain of thought, the power of reason, the play of the imagination, all indeed that makes life dear to us here, and inspires us with the hope of a blissful eternity hereafter. But as their limited vision cannot see what the great Creator never intended them to see with their natural eyes, or to comprehend with their finite intellects, they refuse to allow in the body any earthly abiding place for the soul. Then comes that doubt which shakes the deeply cherished

traditions of the past, which saps the foundation of our present happiness, and dims the lustre of our future hopes. As a general rule they agree that design must regulate the cosmos, but how and where it reigns in its majestic omnipotence, they set down in their minds as unknowable and unthinkable by the human understanding. They cannot admit that there is something behind the veil, which eye has never seen and ear has never heard, something which animates the little cell and produces its wonderful manifestations, and which may live when the mass it animated has filled the span of its physical existence. Yes, there must be something immortal behind, whose light is too bright for human eye to gaze upon ; something whose music would be passing sweet if our senses were only attuned to hear it ; and although this dull and earthly ear may not be delicate enough to appreciate the strain, yet still it is there as part and parcel of that higher music which may hereafter bring perfection to our happiness and bliss. It should be the province of the medical profession to assist in preserving the religious sentiment of the future ; and for this reason, our studies lead us into that region of matter where the physical and the psychical are both inhabitants, where the boundary line of each is so dimly marked that it may require a little faith to leap the chasm. The advancing steps of science may cause some of our past creeds and dogmas to give place to something more rational to an elevated understanding. Dogmas and creeds are human and may be faulty ; they can be changed to suit the changing circumstances that surround us, but this need not destroy the underlying *faith* that dictated them. There need be no conflict between true faith and true science. If there should be, let us hope that the sentiment of immortality is so deeply laid, that at the very point where human reason fails inspiration may come in to bridge us safely over into that realm where present things shall have faded away and higher things become eternal reality.

But I can say no more on this subject. You are to be

your own judges of what is right and wrong ; and all I can tell you is, do not forget that real science, either ancient or modern, is nothing but a knowledge of truth ; that truth will lead you in the path that is right. But before you give up the sublime faith of your ancestors be doubly sure that you are not deceived by something that fades into insignificance before it.

It is time however, for me to bring this rambling address to a close. To the younger members of the Association I have a word to say. It is you who are commencing to scale the giddy heights, "where Fame's proud Temple shines afar." Your ambition is laudable, and let your motto be "Excelsior." The wide and open field is before you. Science spreads a rich feast in front of you, and only asks that you come and partake. As your ancestry worked for you, so you must labor for posterity. You must regard our science as a temple whose foundations are laid deeply in philosophy. Every age as it came and went adorned it with the current ideas of the era ; but every succeeding age saw some of its beautiful fretwork wear away because it could not resist the changes of time. The present century has had a new set of architects at work with appliances unknown to the past, and we find the structure rise before us bolder and grander than at any previous time of its existence. We must contribute our share to it in accordance with the approved ideas of our age, and thus make new niches to rescue from oblivion the great masters of the nineteenth century who have devoted their lives to its cause. Those who come after us may sweep away some of our work to suit a still more philosophical and utilitarian age, but let them at least see that we have not been idle or indifferent in our day and generation.

The result of your studies need not lead to idle speculation, but will conduct you to usefulness and honor. It will make you public benefactors, and assist you in doing good to your fellow man ; in relieving his sufferings and ministering to his infirmities. This is a high privilege and enjoyed by no one to the same extent as by the physician. In your fu-

ture lives I wish you every success, and hope that you will realize a golden reward.

Some of us, gentlemen, have passed the meridian of life and begun to tread the downward path of our earthly existence. We have measured the value of human ambition and know too well what it costs, and what it is really worth. If any of our class has reached a goal which may be the envy of others let it be his pride to turn it to the best account. Over and often have we breasted the storm in our daily pursuits, pocketed our share of ingratitude, and received also a large amount of the best and purest affections of the human heart. These latter are the bright oases in the desert of our past lives. The memory of them will gild the path we may yet have to travel and we will cherish them to our latest hour. This last hour must ere long come to us all; and let me hope that each one of you may spend your declining years in peace and happiness; but still ardent in the cause of your profession. Even when you retire from its active cares to seek the repose you have justly earned, never tire in holding up the dignity and honor of our calling, so that to your latest day you may be an example to the young who are to follow in your footsteps. Finally, when the summons to depart shall come, with clear conscience and the memory of a well spent life, may you find in some higher and better sphere a happy and Eternal Rest.

